

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for forming metal items, the method comprising:

(a)suspending a rotatable roller over a support surface;

(b)positioning a supply of metal adjacent the support surface; and

(c)creating a first layer of the item by melting a portion of the metal with a directional heat source onto the support surface while simultaneously rolling the roller over a plasticized portion of the molten metal in a continuous process, a distance between the roller and the support surface defining a thickness of the first layer of the item, then

(d)creating a second layer of the item by melting a portion of the metal with the directional heat source onto the first layer while simultaneously rolling the roller over a plasticized portion of the molten metal of the second layer in a continuous process, a distance between the roller and the first layer defining a thickness of the second layer of the item.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(e) repeating step ~~(e)~~ (d) for third and subsequent layers to create a vertical stack of layers, each layer being applied adjacent a previous layer.

3.(Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (c) comprises creating the first layer with a constant thickness.

4.(Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (c) comprises using an electron beam as the heat source.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (c) comprises using a laser as the heat source.

6.(Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (b) comprises using aluminum as the metal.

7.(Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (b) comprises using titanium as the metal.

8.(Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

~~step (a) comprises suspending the roller from a gantry, the gantry being used to position and~~
~~move~~ and positioning and moving the roller with the gantry in relation to the support surface.

9.(Original)The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (b) comprises using a wire as the supply of metal.

10.(Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

step (b) comprises using powdered metal as the supply of metal.

11.(Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ 8, further comprising:

controlling the gantry is adapted to be controlled by with a computer; and

~~the computer moves~~ moving the gantry in correlation to a computer representation of the item.

12.(Currently Amended)The method of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ 8, further comprising:

making a computer representation of the item with a computer; then

controlling the gantry is adapted to be controlled by with a the computer; and

~~the computer moves~~ moving the gantry in correlation to ~~a~~ the computer representation of the item, each layer being formed to be a physical representation of a horizontal slice of selected thickness within the computer representation of the item.

13.(Currently Amended) A method for forming metal items, the method comprising:

- (a) suspending a roller above a support surface;
- (b) feeding a wire of metal onto the support surface forward of the roller;
- (c) melting an end of the wire to create a molten puddle; and
- (d) moving the wire and roller simultaneously along the support surface to create a first layer, with the roller rolling on the puddle as the puddle cools; then
- (e) after the first layer has become solid, repeating steps (a) through (c) on top of the first layer to create a second layer on top of the first layer .

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

repeating step (d) to create a vertical stack of layers on top of the first and second layers, each layer being applied adjacent a previous layer.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

step (c) comprises using an electron beam to melt the wire in a vacuum.

16.(Original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

step (c) comprises using a laser to melt the wire in an inert atmosphere.

17. (Currently Amended)The method of claim 13, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

~~a computer controls~~ controlling the movement of the wire and roller in correlation to a computer representation of the item, and forming each layer ~~being formed~~ to be a physical representation of a horizontal slice of selected thickness within the computer representation of the item.

Claims 18-21. (Canceled)

22. (New) A method for forming metal items, the method comprising:

(a) preparing a computer representation of a three-dimensional item to be manufactured in horizontal slices;

(b) mounting a gantry with a roller, a directed heat source, and a supply of metal over a support surface;

(c) based on the computer representation, causing the computer to direct the gantry and support surface to move relative to each other and directing the heat source to apply directed heat to the metal to melt the metal while simultaneously rolling the roller over a plasticized portion of the molten metal in a continuous process, thereby creating a first strip of a first layer of the item; then

(d) based on the computer representation, causing the computer to direct the gantry and support surface to move laterally relative to each other, and repeating step (c) to create a second strip of the first layer of the item, the second strip overlapping the first strip;

(e) repeating step (d) until a desired dimension for the first layer of the item is achieved; then

(f) based on the computer representation, moving the gantry an increment farther from the support surface and repeating steps (c) and (d) for second and subsequent layers of the item on top of the first layer of the item.